

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 DPW-01 SR-02 ORM-03 GAC-01 OMB-01 SCA-01

RSR-01 AID-20 IGA-02 EA-11 /159 W

----- 031617

R 101705 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4277

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5470

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A R A . 3 .)

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, US

SUBJ: INDIA- PAKISTAN- BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENTS

REF: ISLAMABAD 3660 AND 3712

SUMMARY: THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD PARLIAMENT MAY 9 THAT THE RECENT PAKISTANI ROUNDUP OF BENGALIEE CIVIL SERVANTS COULD ONLY RETARD THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION IN THE SUBCONTINENT. HE REJECTED SUGGESTIONS THAT THE US SUPPORTED OR INSTIGATED THE PAKISTANI ACTION AND CAUTIONED MEMBERS AGAINST ALWAYS LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO CRITICIZE THE US. SEPARATELY, FOREIGN MINISTRY PAKISTAN DIVISION JOINT SECRETARY CHIB TOLD US THAT INDIA HAD INFORMED PAKISTAN EVERYTHING COULD BE DISCUSSED ONCE PAKISTAN ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE THAT ALL HUMANITARIAN ISSUES SHOULD BE RESOLVED AT THE SAME TIME.

END SUMMARY

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1. FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH SAID THE GOI HAD HEARD " WITH DEEP CONCERN" REPORTS OF BENGALEE DETENTION IN ISLAMABAD. " PAKISTAN SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT ACTION OF THIS NATURE, INSTEAD OF SOLVING THE HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS... CAN ONLY CUASE FURTHER BITTERNESS AND RETARD THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION IN THE SUBCONTINENT." THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD QUESTIONERS THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT PAKISTAN MEANT BY THE MOVE, BUT THAT IT WOULD ONLY FURTHER EMPHASIZE TO THE WORLD THE PLIGHT OF THE BENGALEES. IN THE UPPER HOUSE HIS DEPUTY REFERRED TO PAKISTANI " PRESSURE TACTICS" TO TRY TO PREVENT POW TRIALS.

2. ALL OF THE QUESTIONERS (TWO CONGRESS AND TWO PRO- MOSCOW CPI) SUGGESTED THAT CHINA AND THE US HAD ENCOURAGED PAKISTAN TO MAKE SUCH AN " AGGRESSIVE" MOVE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER AGREED THAT CHINA AND THE US BOTH SUPPORTED PAKISTAN, BUT HE SAID THAT THEIR POLICIES ON THE HUMANITARIAN ISSUES WERE DIFFERENT. AN AMERICAN SPOKESMAN, HE MAINTAINED, HAD " SUPPORTED" THE INDO- BANGLADESH JOINT DECLARATION AND ALSO HAD FAVORED THE THREE COUNTRIES IN THE SUBCONTINENT RE- SOLVING THEIR DISPUTES THROUGH BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS.

"... I WOULD APPEAL TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS THAT IF THE UNITED STATES MAKES ANY STATEMENT WHICH IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR STAND, WE SHOULD NOT JUST TRY TO BRUSH IT ASIDE MERELY BECAUSE WE DO NOT LIKE THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES ON OTHER MATTERS. WE SHOULD TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE CORRECT POSITION RATHER THAN ALWAYS BE ON THE LOOK OUT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO CRITICIZE THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT."

3. SEPARATELY, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR REVIEWED GENERAL THRUST OF ISLAMABAD 3630 WITH CHIB. CHIB SAID IT WAS ALWAYS REASSURING TO RECEIVE INFORMATION THAT PAKISTAN WAS INTERESTED AND SINCERE IN PURSUING NEGOTIATIONS BUT THAT INDIA WISHED PAKISTAN WOULD CONVEY SOME OF ITS VIEWS DIRECTLY. POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITY OF PAKISTANI BIHARIS WAS THE KEY EXAMPLE HE CITED. CHIB NOTED THAT THE GOI HAD FINALLY SENT A REPLY MAY 8 TO THE SECRET AZIZ AHMED LETTER WHICH WAS RECEIVED AFTER THE APRIL 20 PAKISTAN PUBLIC RESPONSE TO INDO- BANGALEE JOINT DECLARATION. DESCRIBING THE REPLY IN GENERAL TERMS, CHIB SAID THAT INDIA

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HAD DEALT WITH THE APRIL 20 PAKISTAN STATEMENT, ON WHICH AZIZ AHMED' S LETTER WAS BASED, POINT BY POINT. THE ESSENCE OF THE REPLY, HOWEVER, WAS THAT EVERYTHING CAN BE DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE MEETINGS BUT PAKISTAN FIRST MUST ACCEPT BASIC PRINCIPLE THAT HUMANITARIAN ISSUES ALL SHOULD BE RESOLVED AT THE SAME TIME. CHIB NOTED THAT THE REPLY HAD BEEN CLEARED WITH BANGLADESH. (THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

SURENDRA PAL SINGH REITERATED TO THE UPPER HOUSE MAY 9 THAT INDIA HAD NO OBJECTION TO DISCUSSIONS ONCE PAKISTAN ACCEPTED THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF A THREE- WAY EXCHANGE.) ONCE THIS DONE, MODALITIES, NUMBERS, TIMING COULD ALL BE WORKED OUT. INDIA' S REPLY REPORTEDLY DID NOT RAISE THE QUESTION OF RECENT DETENTION OF BENGALLEES IN PAKISTAN.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE INDIA IS SINCERELY SEEKING A WAY TO RESOLVE THE INDIA- PAKISTAN- BANGLADESH IMPASSE, IT ALSO HAS ITS EYE ON INTERNATIONAL OPINION. INDIA FEELS THE JOINT DECLARATION EASED WHATEVER PRESSURE THERE WAS FROM THAT SOURCE. IT CAN THEREFORE NEGOTIATE WITH BANGLADESH AND, ULTIMATELY, WITH PAKISTAN, SLIGHTLY MORE LEISURELY. OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS OVER THE LAST MONTH LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT INDIA RECOGNIZES NEGOTIATIONS WITH PAKISTAN MIGHT PRODUCE A COMPROMISE BASED ON TRIALS OF BOTH BENGALLEES AND POWS AND A HEAD FOR HEAD EXCHANGE OF BIHARIS AND BENGALLEES, AS SUGGESTED IN ISLAMABAD 3660. BUT THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS OF BHUTTO, AND SUGGEST THAT DACCA IS EVEN MORE SUSPICIOUS. THEY THEREFORE ARE SEEKING SOME FIRM COMMITMENT FROM BHUTTO ON " PRINCIPLE."

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